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Foreign Students' Integration into the Finnish Society and Labour Market

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ABSTRACT

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Finland has traditionally been a country of emigration, until the mid 1980s when the migration balance shifted from negative to positive. The fact that the country is steadily becoming more international can also be noticed in the city of Vaasa, which is home to several higher educational facilities that offer a vast amount of degree programmes and studies taught in English.

The aim of this study is to provide information and enlightenment on foreign students' current situation in Vaasa concerning issues about social integration, culture and labour. A questionnaire has been submitted to foreign students studying in Vaasa higher educational facilities with one of the main objectives being the gathering of information about what affects the students' prospects of integration and acculturation, as well as finding out reasons for choosing to study in Finland and their plans upon graduation. The results of the quantitative research showed that there is a clear connection between perceived level of integration and a person's origins.

In order to get some information from an employer's point of view, human resource departments of multinational companies operating business in Vaasa were contacted and issues such as multiculturalism, recruitment procedures and cross-cultural communication were discussed. The responses of two case companies have been presented in the study.

Keywords	Culture, multiculturalism, integration, labour
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Utbildningsprogram i Internationell Handel

ABSTRACT

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Lärdomsprovets namn	Utländska studerandes integrering i det finska samhället och arbetsmarknaden
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Traditionellt sett har Finland varit ett land som präglats av emigration, fram till mitten av 1980-talet då migrationsbalansen svängde från negativ till positiv. Det faktum att landet kontinuerligt håller på att bli mer internationellt märks även i Vasa, en stad där det finns ett flertal högre läroanstalter som erbjuder många olika studieprogram med engelska som undervisningsspråk.

Lärdomsprovets syfte är att ge information och upplysningar kring utländska studerandens nuvarande situation i Vasa, angående frågor om social integration, kultur och sysselsättning. Ett frågeformulär har delats ut till utländska studeranden som studerar i Vasas högre läroanstalter för att kunna uppnå ett av lärdomsprovets viktigaste mål, nämligen att samla in information beträffande vad som påverkar elevernas möjligheter till integration samt att ta reda på anledningarna till varför de har valt att studera i Finland och deras framtidsplaner. Resultatet av den kvantitativa undersökningen visade bland annat att det finns ett klart samband mellan upplevd nivå av integration och en persons ursprung.

För att få information ur en arbetsgivares synvinkel kontaktades HR-avdelningar av utvalda multinationella företag som är verksamma i Vasa och bland annat diskuterades frågor om mångkulturalism, rekryteringsförfaranden samt interkulturell kommunikation. Två av de kontaktade företagen gav kompletta svar som har inkluderats i lärdomsprovet.

Nyckelord Kultur, integration, multiculturalism, arbetsmarknaden

FOREWORD

The streets of Finland are becoming increasingly colourful in terms of cultural diversity and a certain amount of cultural awareness and sensitivity is needed in order to be able to keep up with the needs of society today. Coming from a multicultural background and as a student of International Business, matters of internationality and multiculturalism are of great interest to me and therefore, choosing the theme of the study came naturally to me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made the completion of my thesis possible. I would like to thank family and friends alike for motivating me and providing me with support and feedback whenever needed and for offering constructive criticism whether requested or not, and even though some of the help that I have been fortunate enough to receive has come from people located in other countries - know that your support has given me motivation to carry out with the study.

I would also like to thank all of the respondents who participated in the study, the comments and suggestions received by you have helped me transform this study into something more informative and valuable than I initially could have imagined and as a result my interest in the subject escalated as the work progressed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Finland is an old country, in terms of its aging population. As the so called Baby-Boom generation is entering retirement age, the country is facing a shortage of labour force within the near future. Suggestions have been made to solve this impending problem by e.g. employing the elderly and the unemployed in order to sustain and create more labour. Another idea is to internationalize the labour force through employing immigrants. Although historically a country of emigration, the migration balance went from negative to positive during the 1980s (see Figure 1). The change in the migration trend can be explained through both domestic and international reasons such as for instance the collapse of the Soviet Union, return migration and the increase of the refugee quota. However, the Ministry of Labour has estimated that a mere 5 - 10 percent of immigrants come to Finland for work related purposes. (AEMI, 2009, 31-32, 34; Koivukangas 2003,4)

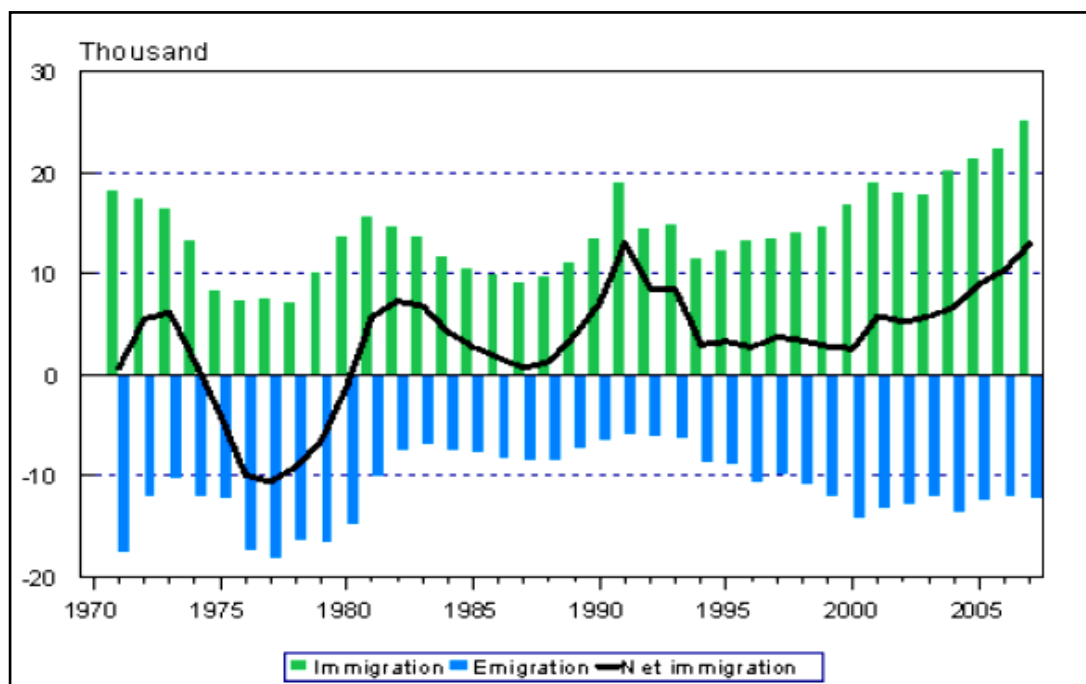


Figure 1: Immigration and emigration in 1971-2007 (Statistics Finland, 2008)

1.1. Research Problem and Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the level of integration experienced amongst international students who are currently studying in Vaasa. What is meant by integration in this context is how the students have settled into the Finnish society, and into the labour force, and their prospects of doing so. One of the desired results of the study is to find out why people have chosen to study in Finland and also how many of the international students intend to stay in Finland upon completing their studies. Quantitative primary research will be done in form of a survey conducted to international business students and the desired results of the survey include answering the following questions:

- Why have the international students chosen to study in Finland?
- Will they stay in Finland upon graduation?
- Is the perceived level of integration linked with other elements?
- Is Finland a prosperous milieu for foreigners?

In addition to finding out, mainly the perceptions on integration from the point of view of present international students, the study will also include thoughts and perceptions on such issues as integration, culture, diversity and multicultural working environments from the viewpoint of representatives of selected companies located in the Vaasa region. Matters closely related to Human Resource Management will be addressed through contacting the different companies with a focus on finding out whether differences occur between the treatment and behaviour of foreigners versus Finnish people. The following points are kept in mind when trying to achieve the desired results of the study from the employer's point of view:

- Factors influencing recruitment and work possibilities
- Pros and cons of a multicultural environment
- Communication within a multicultural working environment

1.2. Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to provide information and enlightenment into the situation of foreign students in Finland and specifically in Vaasa. Extensive research has already been done in the fields of culture and other elements that are of importance and interest to this particular study, and therefore the focus will be to describe the situation of the respondents in Vaasa as accurately as possible through applying the discussions in the theoretical framework to the empirical part of the study. Finding correlations between factors that were not originally thought of would prove to be of added value to the conclusion of the study. Links between for instance place of origin and perception of integration will hopefully be established.

1.3. Vaasa as Target for the Study

The world is shrinking, and by no means in relation to its size. As technology continues to develop, communication is made easier and distances are being reduced due to the fact that nearly all places on the face of the earth are easily accessible from any given point by several different means. The ability to recognize the importance of understanding the impacts that globalization has on society can be crucial for the success of a business or organization that has international ventures.

In terms of nationalities, Vaasa is one of the most diverse cities in Finland. The city is also home to several educational facilities that offer higher education with an annually increasing number of foreign applicants to the various degree programmes taught in English. Vaasa has about 58,000 inhabitants of which around 10,000 are students, and out of these students around 700 are international students studying mainly at either the University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) or at the University of Vaasa, the former having around 200 international students annually and the latter 500. In addition to having several educational facilities with a considerable number of international students, there are several multinational businesses operating in the city, busi-

nesses that rely on international trade and therefore need to be able to meet the demands of an increasingly multicultural society. (Studyinvaasa.fi)

1.4. Research methodology

A survey will be conducted amongst international students, where they will be asked questions concerning their studies, working experiences in Finland, language skills, how they experience the Finnish society and their level of integration. The rest of the information that will feature in the study is derived from books and other studies, information obtained from the Internet will be of great significance due to the fact that it is from there that the most up-to-date statistics and information can be found. All sources, other than the primary research conducted in connection to this study, will be properly referred to and marked in the correct manner.

In addition to researching the integration from the point of view of international degree students – integration will be researched also from the employer's point of view in form of a qualitative study done through computer-mediated communication (CMC). The thesis will investigate cultural factors and the role they play in companies these days, in this case; companies in Vaasa which have a significant amount of foreign staff. In addition the thesis will also research the importance, existence, benefits and/or problems of multiculturalism.

1.5. Limitations of the study

This study will focus on the perceived integration of specific groups of people, which is to say International students as well as researching the perceptions and opinions of those people who are in contact with issues of this matter in their working place – Human Resources staff of selected companies in Vaasa. The study will consist of referrals both to primary and to secondary research data. The primary research will be conducted in form of a survey with mainly quantitative questions which will be addressed to international/foreign students who are currently studying in Vaasa and

also in form of a survey with mainly qualitative research questions which will be distributed to Human Resources-staff of selected multinational companies in Vaasa.

1.6. Structure of the Thesis

The first chapter will provide introductory information regarding the subject of the study. In this chapter the aim of the study will be presented as well as background information describing the purpose of the thesis. In addition, the research approach will be presented along with information that will serve introductory purposes to the topics discussed in the following chapters of the thesis.

The theoretical framework of the study is divided into two chapters and the second chapter marks the beginning of it. In Chapter 2, information mainly concerning one of the key elements of the thesis - the Finnish Labour market and in particular, foreigners' position in today's market, will be presented. Additionally, the size and structure of the foreign labour force and also its development over the years will be viewed briefly and also statistics regarding (un)employment rates will be discussed and compared. The second chapter also provides information from a legal point of view, i.e. legislation affecting immigrants and their positions in the Finnish labour market, followed by a presentation of a few organizations that help immigrants to integrate.

In Chapter 3, the concept of culture will be defined along with the impacts it has on integration and people in the process of acculturation. Principal concepts such as multiculturalism, cross-cultural communication and diversity in the working place will be mentioned along with recognizing the impact that language has on communication.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the surveys conducted. In this chapter, the research methodology will be described as well as the criteria for choosing appropriate respondents for the primary researches conducted for the sake of the study. Research results will be analysed and presented, respondent comments will be discussed and suggestions for further research will be made.

In chapter 5, the previous chapters will be summarized and the research findings will be discussed. Figure 2 shows the structure of the thesis.

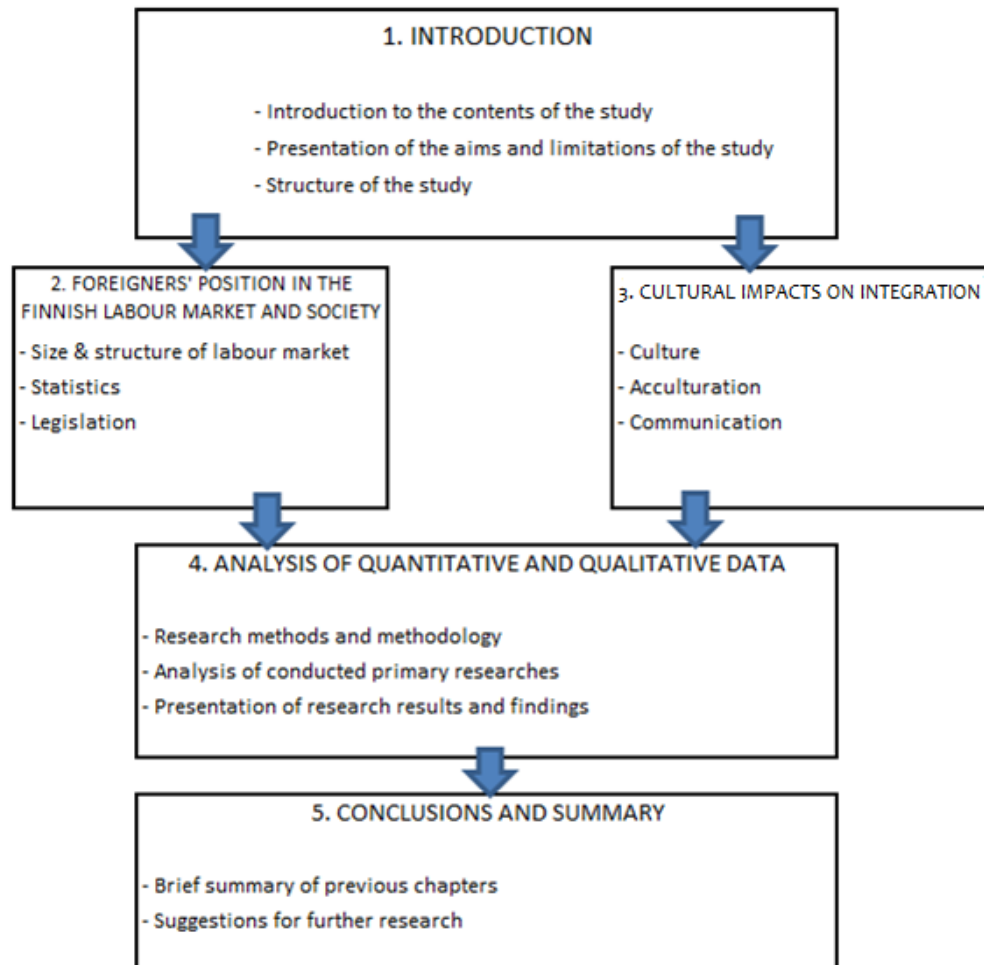


Figure 2: Structure of the thesis

2. FOREIGNERS' POSITION IN THE FINNISH LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIETY

This chapter will delve into the issue of foreigners' position in the Finnish labour market and society. Differences between foreigners' employment rates will be discussed and also, which factors are influential when a foreigner is trying to enter into the Finnish society. Statistics about immigrants, foreign labour and (un)employment rates will be presented, and also laws and regulations concerning integration and discrimination will be discussed along with the organizations that are involved when immigrants are in the process of integrating.

2.1. Foreign Labour in Finland

During the economic depression of the 1990's in Finland, the employment rate plummeted for both the Finnish as well as for the foreign labour force in Finland. However, the difference in terms of percentage, was significant. Foreigners lost their jobs more easily than Finnish people did, they were more dispensable and as the number of immigrants coming to Finland continues to increase annually, one might wonder how much the situation today differs from 20 years ago. (Koivukangas, 2003, 5-6)

Over the past two decades, the number of people living in Finland, who are not Finnish citizens, has increased significantly. In 2008 a total of 143 256 foreigners resided in Finland while the corresponding figure in 1990 was 26 255 individuals, in other words, the number of foreigners residing in Finland has increased by 117 001 persons over a time span of 18 years. Approximately 2.5 percent of the employed labour force is of foreign origin (figures from 2006). Foreign referring to individuals who do not have either of the two official languages Finnish or Swedish, nor the minority language Sami stated as their mother tongue. The biggest language groups among foreigners working in Finland speak Russian followed by Estonian and English. (Statistics Finland, 2009b; Statistikcentralen, 2006)

2.2. The Reputation of the Finnish Educational System

For years, the Finnish educational system has received positive attention and gained a good reputation, partly due to the success of Finnish students in international measurements and comparisons such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in which Finland has ranked highly ever since its introduction in 2000. Finland annually receives a significant stream of delegations called "educational pilgrims" from around 50 different countries who come to the country in order to find out the secret to the success of the Finnish educational system. Research has shown that teachers in Finland are happier than their counterparts in other countries and this might be one of the reasons that Finnish pupils achieve such good results. (PBS)

2.2.1. Student Labour Force

It is common for students to be employed while studying. The older a student is, the higher the chance that he/she is employed. In 2007, approximately 25 percent of students aged 18 were employed and the corresponding figure for students aged 22 or older was 50 percent. There is a variation between the employment situations for students of different fields of education. The fields of study with the highest rates of student employees are Safety and Security with 81 percent and Business and Administration with 71 percent of the students being employed. The regions with the highest levels of student employment are Uusimaa, Itä-Uusimaa, Kanta-Häme, Varsinais-Suomi, Pirkanmaa and Ostrobothnia. (Statistics Finland, 2009a)

If an International student who is a non-EU resident wishes to work in Finland, there are some restrictions to the amount of work that can be performed whilst studying. For a student who has lessons during the semesters, there is a limitation of 25h/week however, there are no limitations on working hours during holidays. Once an international student has completed their degree in a Finnish educational institution, he/she is eligible to apply for a temporary residence permit which is granted by the Police

for a period of up to 6 months during which the student is able to apply for jobs and start working as soon as they have found a job, and if a job is found within the six month period is over, the applicant is able to seek for a residence permit on grounds of the new job which is a source of secured livelihood.

2.3. Unemployment Rate

Finland recovered from the severe economic depression it underwent at the beginning of the 1990's during which the unemployment rate rose at an alarming rate. For several consecutive years until the year 2008, the unemployment rate has been declining.

Table 1: Unemployment Rates in Finland, EA16 and EU27 (adapted from Trading Economics)

Year	Finland	EA16	EU27
	Unemployment Rate (%)		
2001	9,1	8,2	
2002	9,1	8,7	
2003	9,0	8,9	
2004	8,8	9,1	
2005	8,4	8,8	
2006	7,7	7,9	
2007	6,8	7,4	
2008	6,4	8,2	7,5
2009	8,7	10,0	9,5

Table 1 shows the national unemployment rate in Finland, the unemployment rate of the Eurozone (EA16) and the European Union (EU27). During the past decade in Finland, the unemployment rate decreased for seven consecutive years between the years 2001-2008. However, in 2009, the unemployment rate was 8,7 percent in comparison to the year 2008 when the rate was about 6,4 percent. Due to the most recent economical crisis, most countries in Europe and in the rest of the world as well, have experienced a negative trend regarding unemployment rates. Although the national unemployment rate in Finland is below the EU average of 10 percent, the unemploy-

ment rates of foreign citizens living and working in Finland is still considerably higher than it is for the rest of the country and the EU average. (Finfacts)

2.3.1. Comparison of Immigrant Employment Rates

Deriving from statistics, one can note, that people of certain nationalities have higher representation in the Finnish labour market than those from other nationalities or geographical areas. This might be the result of several different factors such as level of education, language barriers and also cultural differences. In some cases, the differences are remarkable. As we were able to see in Table 1, the national unemployment rate of Finland was 8,7 percent in 2009. The unemployment statistics for foreigners however, is at a rate of 20 percent which is more than twice as high as the national rate (statistics from 2007).

The largest immigrant groups in the Finnish labour market come from Russia, Estonia and Sweden. Table 2 shows that the unemployment rate of Swedes living in Finland was estimated to be around 9 percent in 2007, the corresponding national unemployment rate in 2007 was 6,8 percent . The second largest group in the Finnish labour market, the Estonians, have an unemployment rate of 10 percent whilst the biggest group, Russians have an unemployment rate of 30 percent.

Table 2: Immigrant Unemployment Rates

Citizenship	Labour Force (2005)	Unemployment rate (regional labour statistics)					Estimate of the Ministry of Labour		
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005	2006	2007
Russia	11720	42	39	39	36	34	39	35	30
Estonia	8734	20	18	16	15	14	16	12	10
Sweden	3847	17	16	17	16	15	11	10	9
United Kingdom	1773	12	12	14	14	11	13	11	10
Germany	1641	11	11	11	11	11	11	9	6
Turkey	1439	32	31	31	30	27	30	27	23
Somalia	1345	58	60	62	60	59	62	58	53
Serbia	1246	59	56	53	53	45	41	45	38
Thailand	1221	30	29	30	30	27	29	25	22
China	1215	10	9	9	10	8	10	8	7

Iraq	1075	75	73	70	66	64	67	66	62
Iran	928	62	61	61	55	51	60	54	47
USA	893	9	11	10	11	13	12	11	10
Vietnam	774	43	42	42	45	43	48	43	40
Italy	669	16	15	20	17	16	17	13	12
France	650	10	11	13	13	12	14	11	10
Afghanistan	502	...	69	66	75	64	66	62	54
Norway	352	15	15	15	14	13	12	10	8
Morocco	350	50	45	47	46	49	50	47	44
Others	14454								
Foreigners total	54828	31	28	29	27	25	28	24	20

As we discover in Table 2, the immigrants working in Finland with the lowest unemployment rates are EU citizens and the highest rates are those of immigrants from the Middle East and Northern Africa. With an unemployment rate of 62 percent in 2007, Iraqi citizens have the highest unemployment rates followed by Afghani with 54 percent, Somali citizens with 53 percent and Iranian with 47 percent. The majority of Finland's immigrants live in the capital region, and the employment situations for immigrants is reportedly better there than in the rest of the country. According to Helsingin Sanomat (2005) Finnish education and work experience is valued more than the foreign equivalences, and this is a contributing factor to the high unemployment rates of immigrants who consequently are forced to change their professions in order to be able to penetrate the labour market. (Helsingin Sanomat International Edition, 2005)

Language does have an impact on the unemployment rates. A good command of the Finnish language means easy communication and this is also a contributing factor in the case of Estonians in the Finnish labour market. Estonian and Finnish are similar languages and the cultures are alike and therefore it is easy for an Estonian to communicate with a Finnish person and vice versa. Russians generally have a high level of education, a fact that has not seemed to make a great impact on their unemployment rate which was estimated to be around 30 percent in 2007. Table 2 shows that

people originating from western countries generally experience low unemployment rates, which are almost similar to the national employment rates. Although research has shown that the prospects for immigrants to find jobs increases the longer they have stayed in Finland, there seems to be an exception for people originating from the Middle East and from the former Yugoslavia who still experience poor employment rates on the Finnish labour market. Another group with a significantly high rate of unemployment is that of the Somali immigrants who represent one of the largest immigrant groups in Finland. Koivukangas (2003) writes that it is unfortunate that the "increase in immigration to Finland took place in a period when the country was struck by heavy depression" which occurred in the early 1990s, a fact that is also pointed out by Helsingin Sanomat International Edition (2005) by stating that regardless of the fact that a lot of the Somali immigrants have Finnish educations in fields that are experiencing a shortage of labour, they are still experiencing difficulties in finding jobs. It is difficult to find an explanation to this other than that this treatment of the Somali is a result of negative attitudes and impressions, probably stemming from the time of the economic depression. (Helsingin Sanomat International Edition , 2005)

Although such factors as language and culture most likely play a role in the employment situations of foreigners, there are other underlying factors that need to be considered. Marsh (2005) discusses the 'race relations' perspective, a theory that explains why society treats ethnic minorities differently. In certain situations, members of minorities are defined by their distinctive identities and by the way they are treated socially, and consequently certain races are being disfavoured in, for instance employment related matters. Minority groups thus tend to become victimized and classified as 'racially disadvantaged' , a fact that might evoke negative attitudes from the ethnic majority. Marsh uses the following quote by Richard Maudling (quoted in Marsh, 2005, 319) in his book "Sociology: making a sense of society": "Difficulty in race relations arises from the speed of the arrival of immigrants and their concentration in certain areas. This has led to social changes being imposed on the people already liv-

ing in those areas, who perhaps find it hard to accept them. (Marsh, 2005, 319) This quote by Maudling supports the thoughts of Koivukangas (2003) who believes that the reasons for which certain immigrant groups are being treated unequally in the labour market is due to the circumstances under which they came to Finland and therefore the attitudes towards foreigners is already enrooted in the attitudes of the natives.

2.3.2. Most Common Professions amongst Foreigners

According to Statistics Finland, the most common professions amongst the foreign workers in Finland are cleaners, sales professionals and chauffeurs. Other common professions among foreigners include construction work and hospitality work e.g. in the restaurant business. Around ten percent of the foreign workers, i.e. almost 6 000 people are entrepreneurs, the rest are employees. Figure 3 shows that foreigners are well represented in the service field (Statistikcentralen, 2006).

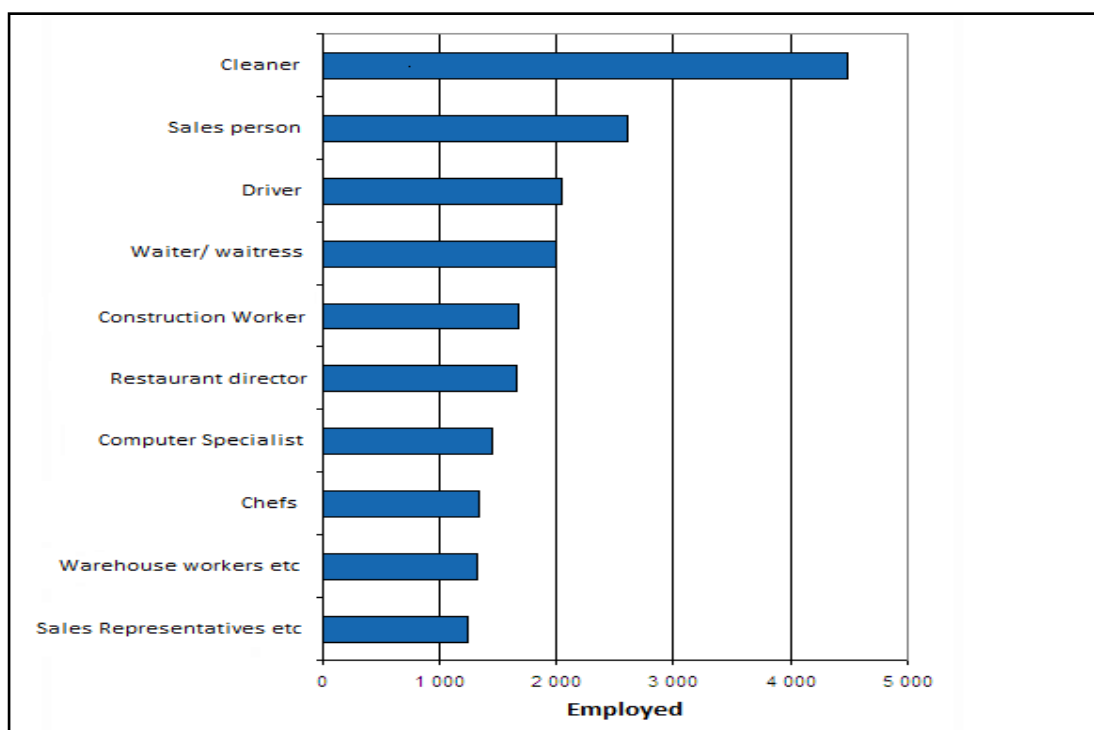


Figure 3. Employment Breakdown (adjusted from Statistikcentralen, 2006)

Marsh (2005) discusses a theory called "the dual labour market theory" according to which, the labour market is divided into two sectors: primary and secondary. Distinguishing factors in the primary market are for instance high salaries, good working conditions and prospects et cetera, and this market attracts the so called "stable" workers. The secondary market on the other hand is quite the opposite, the common traits are for example bad working conditions, low salaries and insecurity, and this market attracts the so called "unstable workers" which are for instance ethnic minorities and women. Fine (1998) states that "the labour market is treated as an uneven playing field, whose surface irregularities are a simple reflection of discrimination." (Marsh, 2005, 333; Fine, 1998, 213)

The employment situations of foreigners in Finland shows that there lies some truth in the dual labour market theory in the sense that there is a high representation of foreigners in fields that would be categorized as secondary market positions. This might also relate to other factors such as language, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

2.4. Equal Opportunities

In order for an organization to attain the most efficient results in terms of resourcing, which is to say hiring the right person for the right job, it is crucial that factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, marital status etc. are not a hinder in the recruitment process. In an ideal situation, equality of opportunity is to be practiced at all times when procuring staff; people are after all considered to be the most valuable of an organization's assets. In order to successfully implement equal opportunity policies, the reasons for doing so as well as the objectives, must be identifiable in order for changes in attitudes to be possible. (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2001, 173-174)

2.5. Legislation Concerning Integration

When facing a new environment for a significant period of time, the ability to integrate into the host society is of utmost importance for a complete and amicable transition into the new surroundings. However, this might not always happen completely without the help of external forces and therefore, there are measures that can be taken into action in order to ensure that immigrants are receiving all the assistance they are entitled to in the process of integration. The act in which these measures are described is called "Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 493/1999" (Integration Act) which took effect on 1 May 1999. For the purpose of this study, mainly the measures concerning the integration of immigrants will be discussed.

Although Koivukangas (2003) points out that the negative attitudes towards certain minority groups might be explained through the economical history of the country, there are also social aspects that ought to be taken into consideration. Zegers de Beijl (2000) states that the reluctance to effectively implement anti-discrimination measures as fundamental parts of integration policies by governments of countries that receive immigrants who live legally and on a permanent basis, might unintentionally contribute to the disintegration of society. Other contributors to disintegration may be employers who do not recognize their corporate responsibility. The probability of inequality occurring is increased when discrimination is not addressed. (Zegers de Beijl, 2000, 5)

2.5.1. The Integration Act

The main aim of the Integration Act is to promote the participation and the influence that immigrants have in the Finnish society and thus improving the management of matters of a social and economic nature of the immigrants. The Act includes methods on how to promote integration as well as equality and freedom of choice. It is important that the culture and language of the foreigner or immigrant is preserved whilst

simultaneously taking part in the functions of society and working life. The fact that there is a need for authorities to seek the promotion of immigrant integration and that there are resources allotted for these measures, shows that individual development is something that will not happen by itself, nor is complete integration a quick process, on the contrary, it might take several years and is highly dependent on the attitudes of the society that the immigrant is surrounded by. (Government report no 5 of 2002 , 4 - 8)

In order to allow successful integration and to optimize the chances of employment, knowledge of either one of the two official languages Finnish or Swedish is almost always required and this also aids in reaching another of the main objectives, which is to develop rapport between Finns and immigrants. Another important step in the integration process is for the immigrants to acquire knowledge and appreciation of the Finnish culture and what it comprises, this includes learning about the Finnish life-style, legal system and working life. Integration is not something that happens through isolating immigrants, and although the Integration Act does not specify what exactly is meant by preserving a culture, upon implementation of the Act, the Finnish Parliament specifically stressed the fact that care is to be taken to make sure that the measures taken to fulfil the objectives of the Integration Act do not infringe upon the rights of the immigrants to their own cultures and languages. (Government report no 5 of 2002, 4-8)

2.5.2. Non-Discrimination Act

The Non-Discrimination Act entered into force in February, 2004. The purpose of the Non-Discrimination Act is to enable and improve legal protection for people who have been discriminated under conditions stated in this Act. The Act specifies what qualifies as discrimination. Both direct and indirect discrimination due to any of the following reasons is prohibited by the act: personal features and characteristics, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, health, disabilities, age, gender. (Ministry of Labour, 2004)

2.6. Organizations Promoting Integration

In addition to the Integration Act and the Non-Discrimination Act, there are organizations, offices and programs which support immigrants in their process of integrating into the Finnish society. While the two Acts are designed to level out the differences between Finnish people and people who have moved to Finland for one reason or another, these organizations provide human contact. Information on gathering necessary skills for managing in the Finnish society and being able to get into the Finnish working life is given by advisors from local authorities and Employment and Economic Development Offices and they also provide assistance in making use of previous qualifications gained outside of Finland. (Guidance for Immigrants and Integration)

2.6.1. Ministry of Interior

As of 2008, the government entity responsible for immigrant integration in Finland is the Ministry of Interior. When an immigrant first comes to Finland they are helped by municipal immigration personnel and employment offices. Immigration plans with the aim to make use of the skills of immigrants of working age and finding jobs and subsequently introducing them into the Finnish society are formed jointly with a labour counsellor. Immigrants who are unemployed and are registered in a municipality in Finland are eligible for income support in the form of labour market subsidy or income support and are simultaneously also eligible to an integration plan with all comprising services.

As previously stated, knowledge of either Finnish or Swedish is crucial for integration and therefore, there are several possibilities for foreigners to participate in various levels of language courses, particularly in the larger towns and cities.

Under normal circumstances, foreigners have the right to an integration plan for up to three years upon registration into a Finnish municipality. Under such conditions that

e.g. the foreigner does not know how to read and write, is completing Finnish basic education, maternity/paternity leave to name a few examples, the period in which a foreigner has the right to an integration plan can be extended. (Ministry of Interior)

2.6.2. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland

The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA in Finnish) provides help for people who are planning on working in Finland for at least two years. Through the help of this Institution, they will be covered by the Finnish social security system as soon as they move to Finland, under normal circumstances. Immigrants who are registered as unemployed job seekers at the employment office and who have a personal integration plan are eligible for Labour Market Subsidy called Integration Assistance during their first three years of their residence in Finland.

2.6.3. Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

An important task of the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment is the implementation of the Integration Act as well as doing follow-up of how it has been carried out. Another important task is to coordinate the regional integration measures in accordance with the national guidelines. Measures such as for example drawing an integration plan, language tuition and training are to be taken in order for the immigrants to better be able to become members of society. (T&E Centralen)

3. CULTURAL IMPACTS ON INTEGRATION

During the second half of the 20th century, the world witnessed the greatest wave of emigration it had ever seen. People were facing new environments they were not used to and exposed to new cultures, often without preparation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 335). Finland has traditionally been known as a country of emigration until the migration balance switched from negative to positive during the mid 1980's (Koivukangas, 2003). As the foreign population continues to grow, so does the amount of minority groups and thus the importance of understanding and recognizing the impacts that culture has on people, is important. There are several definitions, approaches and elements related to culture and cultural studies, in this chapter some of the elements and aspects will be presented.

3.1. Definition of Culture

There are several ways to describe culture, usually several common traits and elements are included and incorporated into the various definitions. Elements such as a common history, language, religion, art and music, to name a few, can all be a significant parts of a culture. However, the definition can also be further elaborated by adding other layers concerning psychology, sociology and anthropology. Peterson (2004) defines culture in one sentence: *“Culture is the relatively stable set of inner values and beliefs generally held by groups of peoples in countries or regions and the noticeable impact those values and beliefs have on the peoples’ outward behaviour and environment”*. (Peterson, 2004, 17)

Hofstede on the other hand draws analogical comparisons between culture and computer programming by calling some of the behavioural patterns within human beings *“mental programs”*, this comparison is however restricted to the name, because unlike computer programs, people’s behaviours are only partially pre-determined by

culture rather than being completely preset. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 2; Hofstede, 2001, 2)

There undoubtedly lies some truth both in Peterson's definition as well as in Hofstede's analogy, both are notable names within cultural studies and research. In layman's terms, one might describe life as a continuous learning-process, during which, human beings develop different patterns of behaviour. A person is most receptive and prone to absorb influences from his/her surroundings during childhood, and therefore several of these patterns are already integrated and established into a person's behaviour at an early stage in life. Consequently, a person must be able to unlearn these traits prior to learning others and this act of unlearning is more complex than the initial learning process itself. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 2; Hofstede, 2001, 2)

3.2. Cultural Integration

In terms of politics, the economy, technology etc. the world is in constant change and the importance of being accustomed to and in synch with the pace of the world is not a new phenomenon. Cultural Integration could be described as a mixture of cultural, religious and social cultures in an environment that requires adaptation in order for the combination of the elements to be functioning. This might be easier to do for some than for others. Some might find a need to consult expert help while others are able to integrate more easily. (Maddox, 1993, 35; Badri, 2005)

3.3. Changing Environment

As previously mentioned, a lot of a person's values and behavioural traits are formed at an early stage in life and are therefore present, to a far extent, subconsciously. People from the same area might have the same sorts of habits, which are an expression or manifestation of the traits that have been 'programmed' into a person's personality since childhood. When a person finds himself/herself in a new environment, e.g. in a foreign country, there are phases that tend to be more or less the same for most people who are faced in the same types of situations. Although the phenomenon culture

shock has been described for several years e.g. in literature, the term “culture shock” was only introduced in 1960 by the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg. Culture shock, in short, can be described as the phase of a person's adjustment process into a new environment, where he or she is somewhat overwhelmed by the differences between their home country and those of the new host country. (Hofstede et al, 2005, 323-324; Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, 2009, 397)

3.3.1. The Acculturation Curve

In most cases, when a person has been exposed to a new environment, certain phases are identifiable and they tend to follow the same pattern in terms of elements included in the phases but do, however, vary in length from person to person. Acculturation is a lengthy process during which a person adjusts to a new culture and requires the person to gather useful knowledge and understanding of the new culture. (Samovar et al, 2009, 400)

As demonstrated in the Acculturation Curve (figure 4), the initial phase, also known as the “*honeymoon*” is positive for the person going through the acculturation process and involves feelings such as excitement of visiting new places and experiencing new things; the duration of this phase is estimated to be anything between a few days up to 6 months, however, this phase is usually short in proportion to the following phases. After the first impressions have sunk in, and the honeymoon phase is over, the actual phase of *culture shock* begins, this is the phase in which feelings change, in a downward curve, from positive to negative. Feelings of the negative nature towards the new environment might last for a few months before moving forward to the following phase. The third phase, *acculturation*, happens when the person has begun to learn and accept the customs and values of the new environment and even perhaps started to adopt some of the habits, in this phase the curve starts getting a more positive slope and eventually reaches the fourth and final stage of the acculturation curve, the *stable state*. This state of stability might equal the feelings towards the person's

home; it might even exceed the feelings of positivity towards the original homeland. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 323-324)

However, research has shown, that the length of the phases differs in relation to the time spent abroad and for a person staying several years, the cultural shock phase might last for a significant period of time prior to acculturation. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 323-324; Oberg, 1954)

Smith Castro (2003) states that the core concept of acculturation is that the process is a result of cultural interactions, and socially valued resources such as wealth, property, income and cultural products which tend to be unequally accessible for different cultural groups, are a result of this. (Smith Castro, 2003, 10)

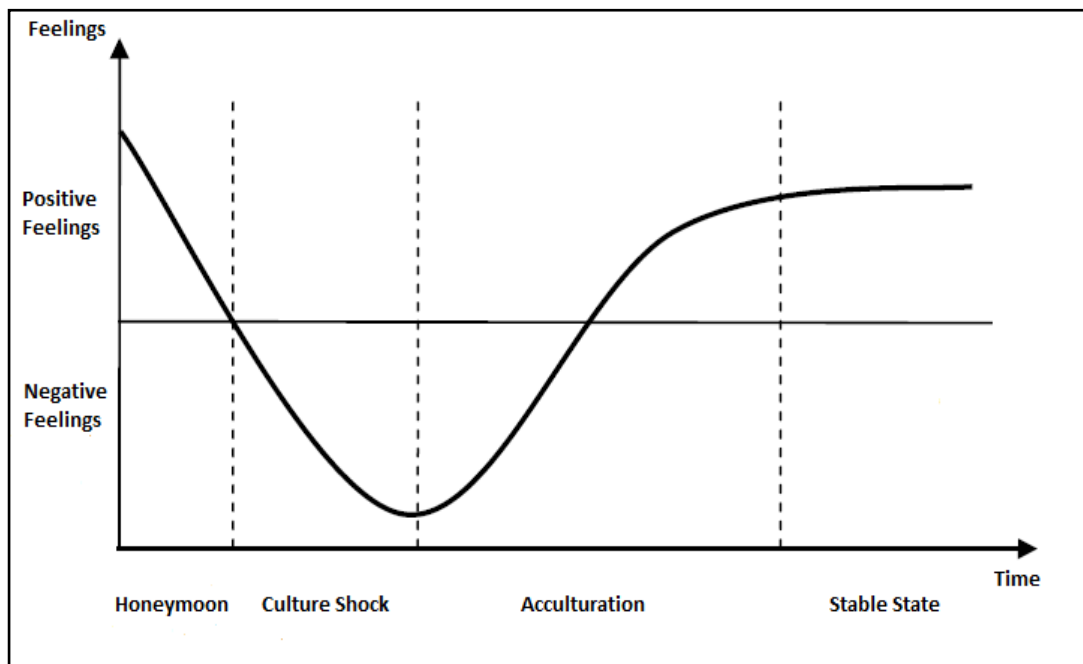


Figure 4: The Acculturation Curve (adjusted from Hofstede et al., 2005, 324)

There are varying political ideologies concerning the relations between majority and minority populations. Policies of civilized governments tend to be a choice between two different approaches; assimilation and integration. The assimilation approach aims for the minority population to become like the majority population and in a sense to *homogenize* the population. The other approach, integration, encourages the minority populations to maintain their cultures whilst simultaneously being accepted into the (new) society. Integration policies have proven to lead to faster adaptation than assimilation. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 335)

3.4. Organizational Culture

A culture is, as previously described, a group of people who to some extent have shared values and mentalities, and it is these shared features of the members of the various existing cultures that make cultures unique and different from one another. However, there are other groupings of people which basically function in a similar manner, groups other than the national cultures usually associated with the word.

Organizational Culture, which also incorporates the term Corporate Culture, on the other hand has similarities with national cultures in the sense that the people within an organization learn to think, feel and act in similar manners and the members of the organization develop shared values. People of an organization develop certain habits, rituals and ways of interacting that differentiates the atmosphere of their organization from that of others. Hofstede et al (2005) describes organizational culture as a "collective programming of the mind" which not only reflects upon its members but also on others who come in contact with the company such as stakeholders, business partners, media etc. and the perceived organizational culture is rather powerful in the sense that it can awake positive as well as a negative feelings in people.

Organizational culture is something that a person chooses to adapt through joining the organization and it is a state that will most likely not last throughout a person's lifetime due to the fact that jobs change and end, as opposed to national culture which is

something a person is born into and that is a continuous presence in a person's life. (Hofstede et al., 2005, 35, 281-284)

3.5. Understanding Cultural Differences

From the point of view of an employer, it is highly beneficial to know and to understand as much as possible about cultures differing from the culture that is “the norm” of the organization. The more understanding about cultural differences, the easier it is to e.g. develop policies and choose suitable strategies for the organization. Genuine *cultural empathy* can in turn lead to successful communication and interaction within the organization that is culturally diverse. Studies have shown that lack of cultural sensitivity results in loss of opportunities and money for businesses. Schein (2004) even suggests that failing to understand the forces that are created as a result of organizational or social situations, turns us into victims. (Deresky, 2002, 83; Schein, 2004, 3)

3.6. The Language Barrier

Concerning cross-cultural interaction, there are several obstacles one might think of. Perhaps the biggest and most obvious barrier of them all is language. Learning a language through and through requires more than developing a vast vocabulary. A language is layered and encompasses unique cultural patterns and thus, merely understanding the meaning of a word does not necessarily mean that one understands what is meant by saying the word. People who are living in a foreign country, where they are not fluent or comfortable with the local language, might feel socially isolated and hence seek jobs or work in fields other than their own and in that way avoid communicating in a language they're not comfortable in. (Samovar et al., 2009, 400)

Translation methods have been used for decades, however, it has been known for a long time that although there are several existing means for translating, by for instance using software, the most reliable translator is a human being. Fact is that businesses of today are becoming increasingly global and international business requires

international communication. Successful communication, in turn, requires a common language in order to relay information and messages between the involved counterparts and the language which has gained most recognition as being the primary choice of business language between businesses operating internationally, is English. Not only is English the most common language of communication between businesses where one business counterpart's primary operating language is English, but it is also the most commonly used lingua franca of today when neither counterpart's primary operating language is English. (Sternkopf, 2005, 52; Gudykunst et al., 69)

The choice of language does of course depend on other factors as well. Although language can be seen as a barrier when sufficient knowledge is missing, however, knowledge of a language is also a merit and although there are languages such as English and French, which are commonly used as lingua franca, a person who understands the various layers of a language can be a great asset to for instance a multinational organization. As Samovar (2004) states, sometimes it is easier for people to find jobs in fields other than their own, due to linguistic obstacles; the recognition of foreign language skills as being assets could be highly beneficial for organizations.

3.7. Human Resource management in International Organizations

For an organization, the recruitment and selection process is essential for maintaining a healthy and prospering business, in the sense that it is the activity that matches an applicant with a job. If an unsuitable match has been made, it can have negative consequences for an organization, such as e.g. reduced effectiveness, monetary loss and also have the effect of invalidating reward and development strategies. (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2001, 113-115)

3.7.1. Pros and Cons of a Multicultural Working Environment

One of the biggest advantages of having teams and staff consisting of people coming from several different cultures is the increase in creativity, which in turn results in an increase in productivity. Multicultural teams tend to be more creative due to the fact

that when and if an idea is presented and rejected, another one is presented shortly after, this effectiveness is enabled because of the several different ways of thinking within a multicultural team. On the other hand, people tend to feel more comfortable interacting with members of their own (national) culture due to reasons such as communication and trust. Multicultural teams are inclined to have issues with mistrust which can be the result of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. When interacting with people from other cultures than one's own, people are inclined to generalize and are prone to stereotyping rather hastily. (Adler & Gundersen, 2002, 141-146)

3.7.2. Managing International Personnel

Matching the right person with the right job is one of the main tasks of Human Resource Management and therefore it is important not to make choices based on such factors as cultural background but instead to take a person's abilities into consideration. This also needs to be taken into consideration when creating multicultural work teams. Recognizing and acknowledging the differences within the diverse team is important and also creating a team that consists of people with similar abilities and viewpoints, and as long as there is understanding in the group, it is easier for the team to comprehend why a person might act and react in a certain way.

3.7.3. Cross-Cultural Communication

Communication essentially is a multilayered and dynamic means of exchanging meaning from one person to another and the whole process includes interpretation. Communication is both verbal and non-verbal and signals can be sent both consciously and also when the sender of the message is not aware of sending messages; it is impossible *not* to communicate when saying or doing something. All communication involves a sender and a receiver. Communication is indirect rather than direct and therefore the sent message is never identical to the message being received as can be seen in Figure 5. (Adler et al, 2008, 70)

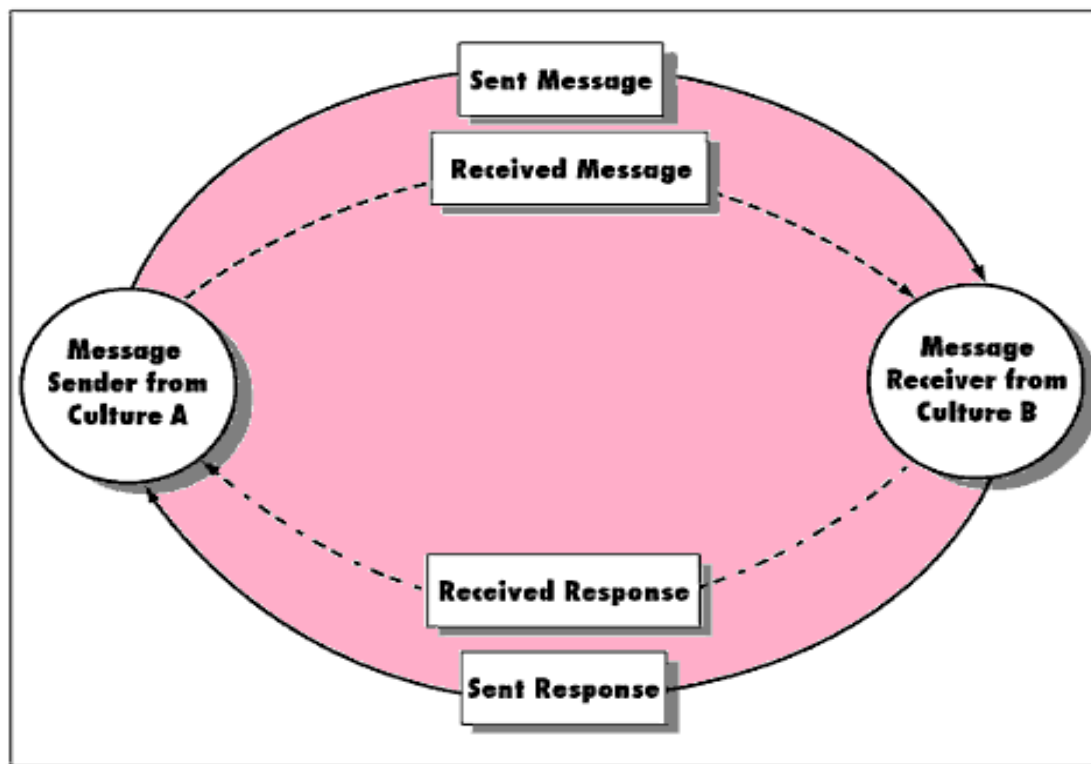


Figure 5: Communicating Across Cultures (source Adler et al., 2008, 70)

When a person from one culture communicates with a person from another culture, cross-cultural communication occurs and when the person from the second culture who is receiving the message somehow misinterprets and thus does not receive the message that the sender intended to be sent, a miscommunication occurs. A rule of thumb in cross-cultural communication is that the greater the distance between the cultures of the sender and the receiver, the more likely the chance of miscommunication happening, differing cultures reduce the chances of a message reaching the receiver in the intended way. (Adler et al, 2008, 71)

However, incorporating the term culture into theories about communication can have several approaches and for culture to be incorporated into communication theory, culture has to be treated as a theoretical variable. Gudykunst & Moody (2002) use the definition by Foschi and Hales (1979) to explain how culture can be used as a

theoretical variable: "culture x and culture y serve to operationally define a characteristic a , which the two cultures exhibit to different degrees". As opposed to Adler et al. (2008) who generalize cross-cultural communication by stating that geographical distance between the communicators representing different cultures, is a key factor to the occurrence of miscommunication; treating culture as a theoretical variable implies that there will be differences regardless of the distance.

4. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

Two types of research have been conducted for this study. In this chapter, the results of the two surveys that were administered will be presented. The first questionnaire consists mainly of quantitative research questions, with a few qualitative elements, and was conducted amongst international students of higher educational facilities in Vaasa. The second questionnaire consisted of mainly qualitative questions and was distributed to Human Resource departments in selected multinational companies operating in Vaasa of which one case company will be presented.

4.1. Research methodology

There are two main types of research methods: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research encompasses several different methods such as e.g. structured interviews, case studies and observation, to name a few examples and the term in itself is therefore an umbrella term. Quantitative research on the other hand often involves a large number of data, often numerical, and one frequently thinks of statistics and numbers when thinking of quantitative research, whereas qualitative data are not usually numerical and can therefore not be analysed using the same methods as quantitative data i.e. statistics. (Muijs, 2004, 1-3)

4.2. Reliability and validity

The design of the questions, the thoroughness of the pilot testing and the structure of the questionnaire all play an important role in the validity and reliability of the collected data as well as the achieved response rate. Validity refers to the accuracy of the data being collected whilst reliability refers to the consistency of the collection of the data. (Saunders et al, 2009, 371)

Reliability involves three prominent factors which are *stability*, *internal reliability* and *inter-observer consistency*. Stability refers to whether or not time can influence a measurement, stability occurs if an administered questionnaire can be re-administered after some time and achieve similar results or results with little fluctuation. Internal reliability refers to the consistency of the indicators that make up the scale and inter-observer consistency refers to the possible effects of subjective judgement on the research results. (Bryman & Bell, 2007, 163-164)

Validity, which concerns the integrity of conclusions that a piece of research generates is perhaps the most important criterion of research. A criterion that applies mostly to quantitative research is *measurement validity*. Basically this refers to the question whether or not a measure really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to represent.

4.3. Using quantitative research methods for the study

After taking several options into consideration, the research method determined to be most suitable for obtaining the research results for the primary aim of this study was quantitative research in form of a questionnaire. Quantitative data per se, prior to analysis, does not provide a lot of information for someone who is observing it. In order to make the data useful, it is important to transform the data into e.g. charts and diagrams so that information is visible through a collective measurement of what is being researched. These days there are numerous computer programmes or analysis software that can assist in transforming the data into something informative, such as Microsoft Excel, Minitab and SPSS to name a few and as opposed to not so many years ago, making calculations by hand is no longer required and therefore quantitative research is far less time consuming than it has previously been. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, 414-415)

The types of research questions that quantitative research is best suited to find answers to are, according to Muijs (2004), the following points (summarized):

1. When in search for a quantitative answer, e.g. "What is your age?"
2. When trying to find out numerical changes, e.g. if the number of international applicants has increased or decreased from last year.
3. Discovering trends and affecting factors using quantitative methods
4. Testing of hypotheses

4.3.1. Choosing respondents and determining the target group

As the title of the thesis indicates, the main group of interest for this particular study is that of foreign students living and working in Finland and more specifically for this study, foreign students studying above upper secondary school-level in Vaasa. Due to the nature of the distribution method used, i.e. sending e-mails to mailing lists received from the Student Offices of the various educational facilities in Vaasa that offer degree programmes in English, the e-mail containing the questionnaire was also received by people who did not meet the criteria for being able to participate.

The following explanatory message in form of a covering e-mail was sent, explaining what the questionnaire was about and for whom it was aimed:

"Dear Foreign/International students,

I am a student of International Business at the University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa. I am currently writing my Bachelor's thesis concerning foreigners' integration into the Finnish labour market, and am therefore conducting a survey amongst foreign/international students of higher educational facilities here in Vaasa.

I would be thankful if you could spare a few moments to fill in the questionnaire that I have attached to this message and send the filled in questionnaire back to me".

All the received responses, save for one response by a Finnish student and therefore not a foreign student, have been included in the study. The questionnaire itself also

includes a more specific explanatory message which informs the respondents of who is conducting the research and for which purpose (see Appendix 1).

4.3.2. Pilot testing

Prior to delivering the questionnaire to the targeted respondents, a pilot test was conducted during week 10 (2010) to be able to detect eventual flaws in the questionnaire and to see whether the questions were understood and interpreted in the way that the researcher intended them to be, and also to be able to see if the answers were understandable for the researcher. Given the fact that the research concerns and targets international students studying in Vaasa, the language of the questionnaire is English and although the respondents for whom the questionnaire is intended are studying subjects which have English as the language of tuition, a majority of the respondents do not have English as their first language and therefore the simplicity of the language and the choice of words had to be carefully deliberated.

The respondents of the pilot test were University-level students with experience of being international students and who do not have English as their native language. The results of the pilot test showed that the questionnaire was understandable for the respondent and the test also revealed that there were no noticeable errors in the questionnaire.

4.3.3. Distribution and administering

The results of the pilot test were positive and therefore the questionnaire was determined suitable for administering. The method of distribution used for reaching as vast an amount of international students in Vaasa's various higher educational facilities as possible was e-mail. The questionnaire was prepared in Microsoft Word, a widely used word processing programme and easily accessible to students through using computers located e.g. in school facilities. In order to obtain the email addresses of international students studying in Vaasa, the student offices of the universities and polytechnics in Vaasa that offer degree programmes in English were contacted, i.e.

the University of Applied Sciences, Hanken, and the University of Vaasa. After acquiring the necessary contact information, the questionnaire was distributed to students asking them to reply to the e-mail by sending the filled in questionnaire as an attachment. The questionnaire was administered to approximately 300-400 students between weeks 11 - 15 (2010).

4.4. Questionnaire for International students in Vaasa

Subsequent to obtaining the e-mail addresses and mailing lists of the targeted recipients of the questionnaire, the survey was conducted amongst International students studying in Vaasa's higher educational facilities. The desired outcome of the survey was to gather information that would provide insight into the situation of international students in Vaasa today. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consisted of 22 questions of which the majority were of a quantitative nature, and the respondents were also given the chance to add comments regarding the questions and the survey. The software used to analyse the quantitative data was primarily the statistical programme SPSS as well as a few calculations being done by the help of Excel.

4.4.1. Analysis of the research questions

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of questions designed to gather some background information about the respondents of which the first two questions were demographic, asking the respondents to state their age and gender. The questionnaire had a total of 52 respondents of which 23 were female and 29 male. Two of the respondents, one of each gender did not state their age. Figure 7 is a crosstabulation of the two first questions and it shows the age and gender distribution.

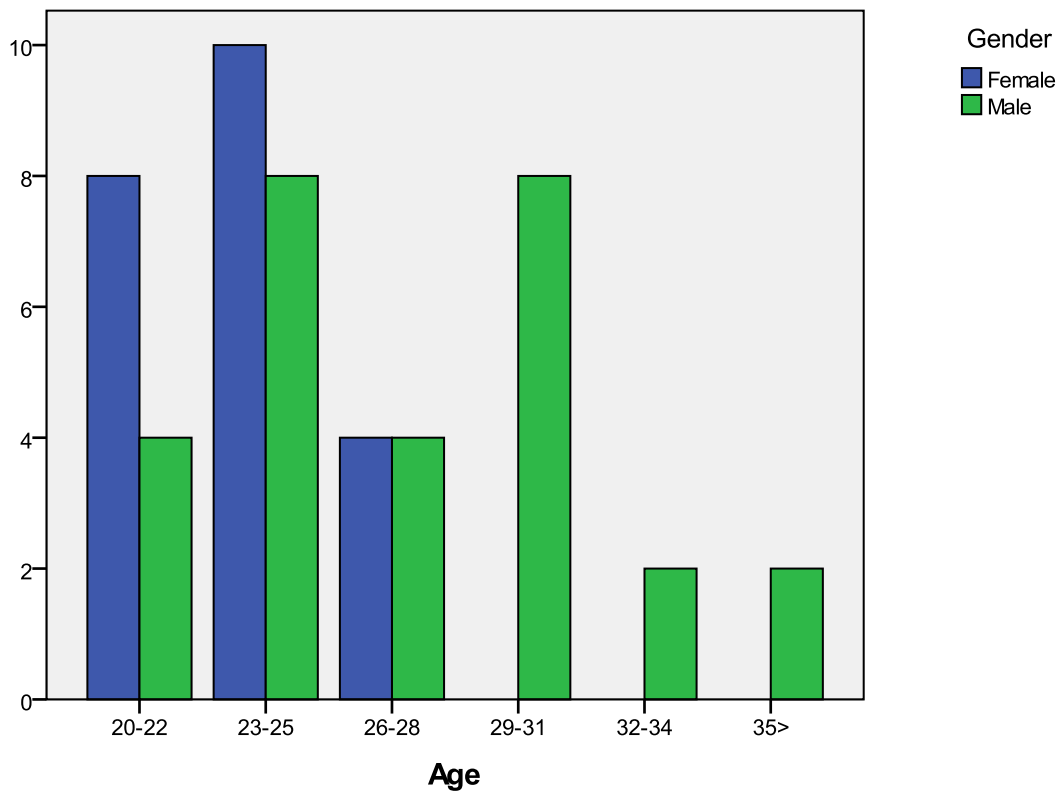


Figure 7: Age and gender distribution

The following questions concerned background issues i.e. how long the respondent has been living in Finland, how long they are planning on staying, for which reason(s) they moved to Finland, in which of Vaasa's higher educational facilities the participant is studying, main reason(s) for choosing to study in Finland and also which continent the respondent is originally from, with the option of stating the country.

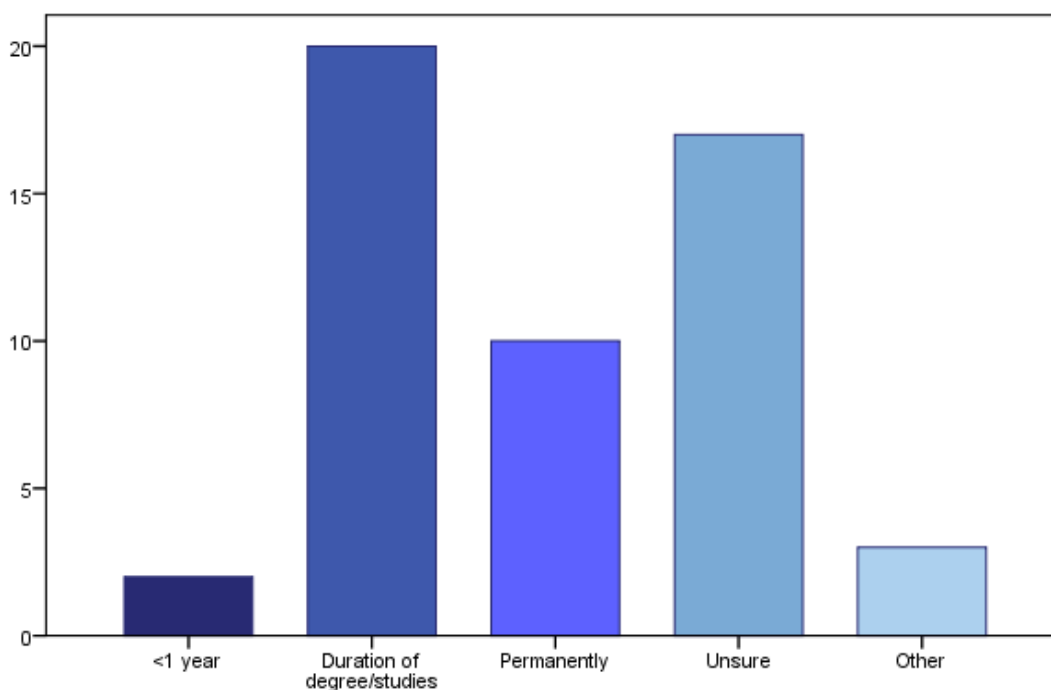


Figure 8: How long are you planning on staying in Finland?

A majority of the respondents stated that they have been living in Finland for less than 3 years, and as can be seen in Figure 8, the most frequent response the question how long the respondent is planning on staying in Finland was either for the duration of their degree/ studies followed by uncertainty regarding the duration of their stay. Most of the respondents stated that they moved to Finland because of studies, only 7 out of the 52 respondents did not select studies as one of their reasons for moving to Finland. Five of the respondents stated that they moved here because of their spouse/partner and six respondents chose work as a reason for moving to Finland. The respondents were able to choose all the alternatives that applied to them.

All of the respondents are currently studying, of which two are exchange students, and the rest degree students. The majority, 41 responses came from students studying at VAMK University of Applied Sciences followed by the University of Vaasa with 9 respondents and 2 from Hanken; 42 respondents are studying for their Bachelor's degree, 9 for their Master's degree and one respondent is a PhD student.

Finland is renowned for its high standard of education, a fact that is visible amongst the respondents with 20 out of 52 choosing quality of education as one of the reasons for studying in Finland. However, the biggest motivator for studying in Finland is the free/inexpensive education with a total of 32 respondents choosing this option.

Figure 9 shows that most respondents were from Asia followed by Africa, Europe and South/Central America. The respondents were also given the opportunity to separately state which country they were from.

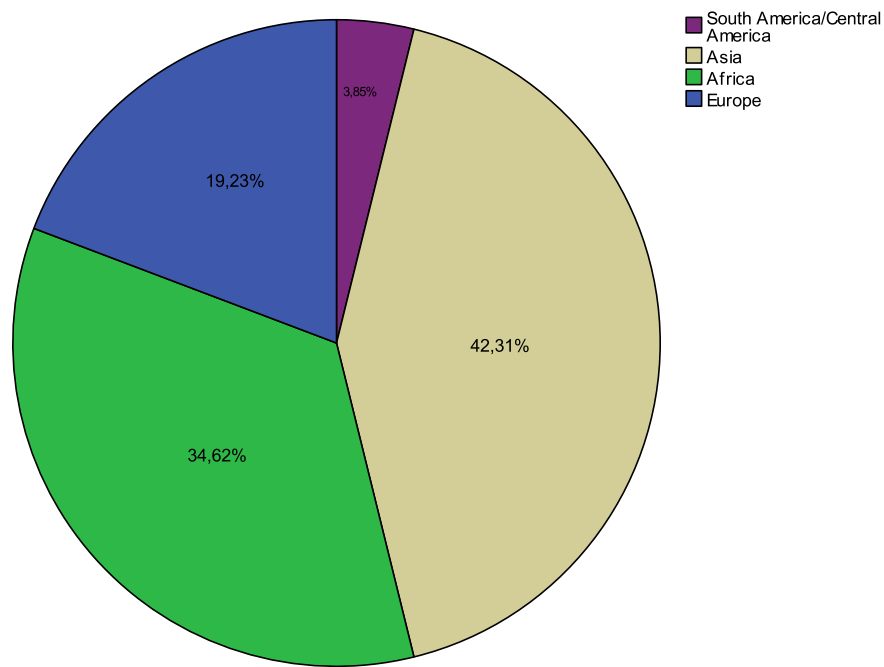


Figure 9: Origin of the respondents

The introduction and background questions were followed by general questions regarding current employment situations, practical training experiences in Finland, previous degree, language competency and the perceived importance of knowledge of the local language(s) followed by questions concerning the treatment of and attitude

towards foreigners in Finland. The respondents were also asked whether or not they have participated in any form of integration programme, their knowledge of the Finnish society, if they regret coming to Finland and finally, the respondents were asked to rate how integrated into the Finnish society they considered themselves being.

A total of 19 respondents, of which 13 are currently studying for their bachelor's degree, stated that they have a previous degree from their home country. A total of 25 respondents are currently working; 5 are full-time employees and 20 have part-time jobs while 12 are unemployed, 12 are job-seekers and 3 that they are not looking for a job at the moment. Nowadays several degrees require a portion of practical training and a majority of the respondents either have done or will do their practical training in Finland.

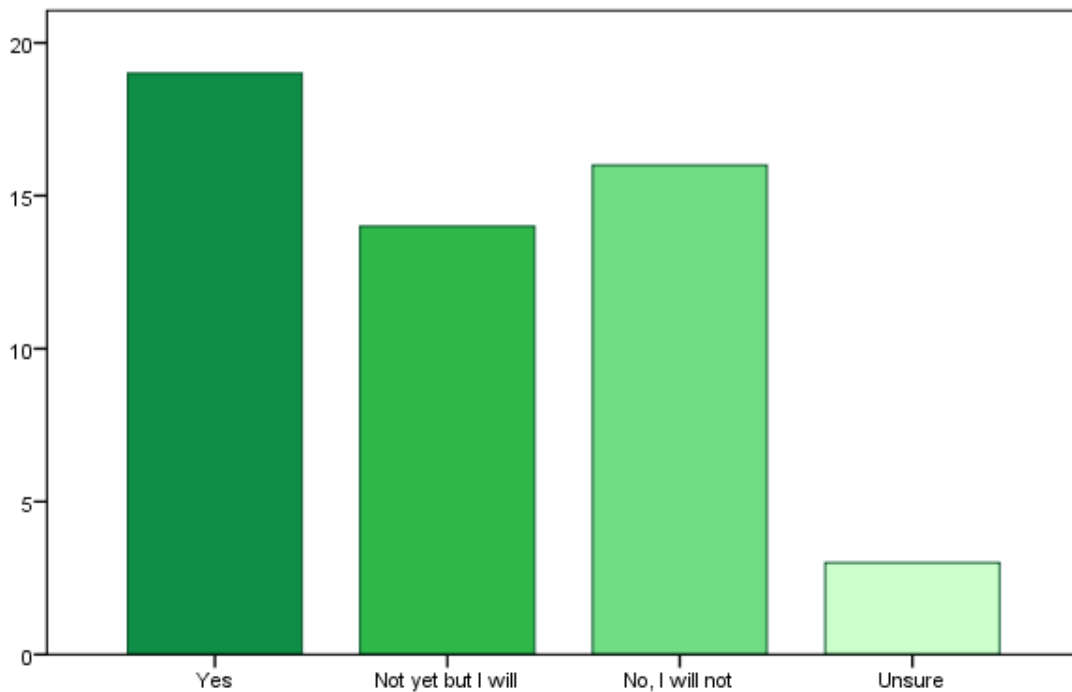


Figure 10: Have you done your practical training in Finland?

The most common reason for not doing practical training in Finland is not being able to find a placement, some prefer to do their practical training elsewhere and the rest either due to other reasons or because their studies do not require practical training.

When asked whether or not knowledge of the local languages is important when living and working in Finland the results show that respondents believe that knowledge of the local language is more necessary for work related purposes than for living. In total 46 respondents believe that either Finnish or Swedish skills are necessary when working in Finland in contrast to 38 perceiving language as a necessity for living here. More than half of the respondents are either currently attending, have attended or planning on attending a Finnish or Swedish language course, 13 of the respondents speak either Finnish or Swedish fluently enough to have a conversation in.

Nearly half of the respondents experience the attitudes towards foreigners in Finland as either positive or mostly positive and the most frequent response is that the attitude towards foreigners is neutral while 8 would describe the general attitude as mostly negative or negative.

Table 3: Crosstabulation of Origin * Attitude towards Foreigners

		Where are you originally from?				Total
		Europe	Africa	Asia	South/ Central America	
How would you describe the general attitude towards foreigners in Finland?	Positive	2	0	6	2	10
	Mostly positive	5	3	7	0	15
	Neutral	3	9	7	0	19
	Mostly negative	0	5	1	0	6
	Negative	0	1	1	0	2
Total		10	18	22	2	52

Table 3 depicts a crosstabulation of two questions, and it shows that there is a connection between perceived attitude of Finnish people towards foreigners and place of origin. One third of the African respondents feel that the general attitude of Finnish

people towards foreigners is either mostly negative or entirely negative in comparison to two thirds of the European respondents who consider the attitudes of Finnish people being either mostly positive or positive.

More than a quarter of the respondents stated that they have experienced special treatment due to their origins whilst being in Finland, almost three thirds of the respondents who have experienced special treatment are of African origin. Nearly half feel as if their respective schools offer a sufficient amount of information about the Finnish society and around a quarter have participated in some form of integration program.

When asked if Finland is significantly different from the home countries of the respondents, a strong majority, around 86,5 percent responded that Finland is significantly different. Three out of 52 respondents stated that they regret coming to Finland, 13 answered that they sometimes regret having come to Finland and 33 that they do not regret their choice. Most of the respondents, 40 out of 52, have stated that they would stay and work in Finland upon graduation if they were given the choice or opportunity.

When asked to rate their level of integration on a progressive scale from 1- 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, the results show that the perceived level of integration is rather high. The mean score for integration for the entire group of respondents was 3,15 and as figure 11 shows, the most frequent option chosen was an integration level of 4 which equals the "not fully integrated"- alternative.

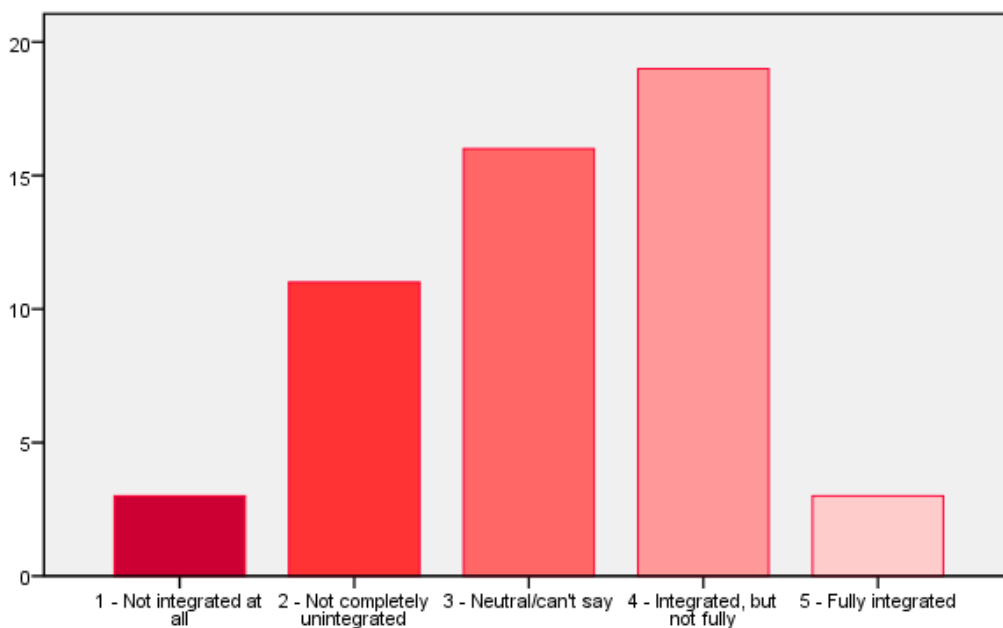


Figure 11: How integrated into the Finnish society do you consider yourself on a scale from 1-5?

4.4.2. Research findings

The data deriving from the questionnaire for international students revealed that there is a clear connection between the geographical origins of the respondents and the level of integration the respondents consider themselves having. Table 4 portrays a crosstabulation between the results of the questions "where are you originally from" and "how integrated into the Finnish society do you consider yourself on a scale from 1-5". All of the respondents who stated that their level of integration is 1 which in other words means that they do not feel integrated at all, were from Africa and they were all male.

Table 4: Crosstabulation of Origin * Level of Integration

		Where are you originally from?				Total
		Europe	Africa	Asia	South/ Central America	
How integrated into the Finnish society do you consider yourself on a scale from 1-5?	1 - Not integrated at all	0	3	0	0	3
	2 - Not completely unintegrated	3	4	4	0	11
	3 - Neutral/can't say	0	6	8	2	16
	4 - Integrated, but not fully	6	4	9	0	19
	5 - Fully integrated	1	1	1	0	3
Total		10	18	22	2	52

Although the tone of some of the comments received by the respondents was slightly negative in nature, they were not entirely unexpected. It is evident that geographical background which to some extent also encompasses the appearance of a person has an effect on how people are treated in Finland. Is it for instance a coincidence that Africans tend to feel the least integrated into the society and that they are the ones who have stated most frequently of all respondents that they have been subjected to special treatment due to their origins, as can be seen in figure 12?

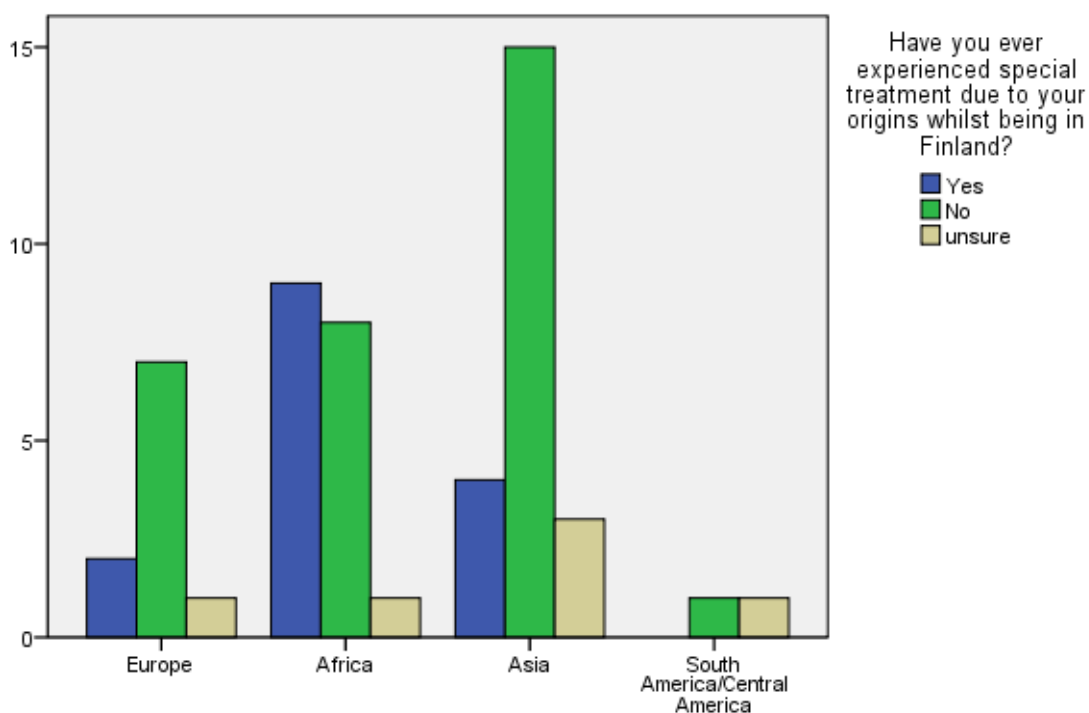


Figure 12: Crosstabulation of Origin * Experienced Special Treatment

None of the three respondents, who have stated that their level of integration is 1, which corresponds to not being integrated at all, have been living in Finland for less than one year. According to such notable experts in the field of culture as e.g. Gert Hofstede or Kalervo Oberg, the different phases of the acculturation curve vary in length from individual to individual. This might be an explanation to why the overall integration level of respondents who have lived in Finland for less than a year is higher than the mean for the respondents who have been living in Finland between 1 year - 2 years and 11 months. As can be seen in figure 4 in chapter 3, the acculturation curve gets a negative slope after some time has passed only to start rising as the people undergoing acculturation are starting to feel more comfortable in their new environment.

Figure 13 shows the average level of integration on a scale from 1 - 5 of the respondents, divided into groups depending on how long they have been living in Finland. The curve has a partially similar trend as the curve in figure 4. However, factors such

as the amount of respondents have most likely affected the curve. For instance, in total only four of the respondents have lived in Finland for five years or longer whilst the group of respondents who have lived in Finland for less than a year consists of 16 respondents. The calculations and the graph were generated in Excel.

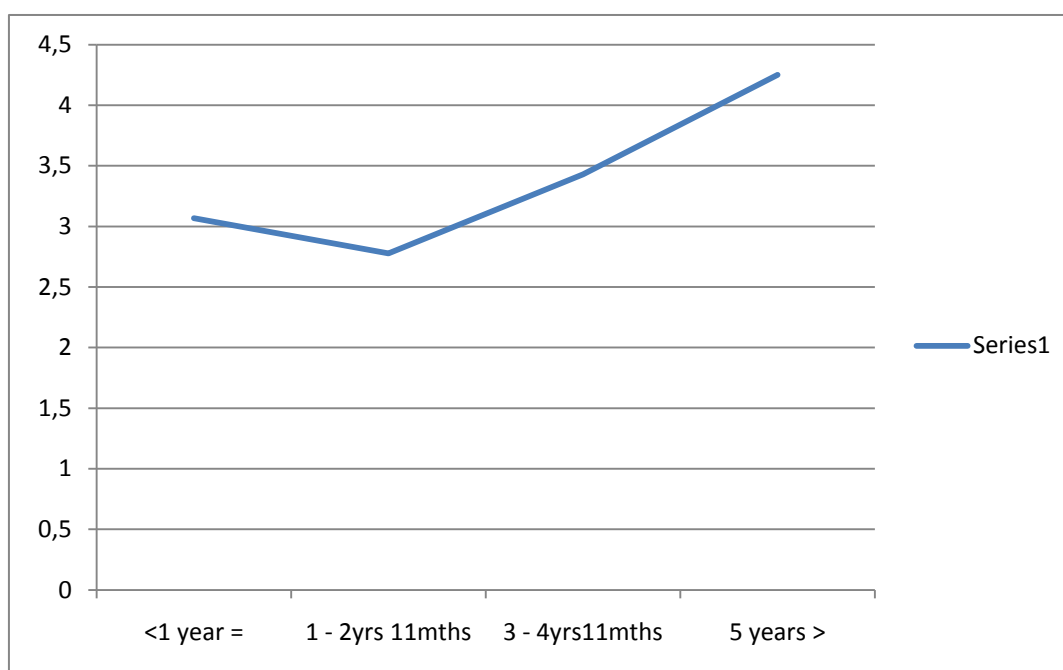


Figure 13: Mean Level of Integration

Nearly half of the respondents have stated that they are currently employed, of which 5 have full-time jobs and the remaining 20 have part-time jobs and several of the other respondents are job-seekers. Although a majority of the respondents moved to Finland for the sake of studying, having a job on the side of studies seems to be desired or perhaps even a necessity. Out of the 18 respondents that are of African origin, 13 stated that they are working. The corresponding figure for the respondents of Asian origin is 6 out of 22 are employed.

However, this outcome could be directly influenced by the fact that merely 7 respondents did not list studies as one of their reasons for moving to Finland.

4.4.3. Respondent comments

Although the questionnaire for foreign/international students was primarily of a quantitative nature, the respondents were given the opportunity to comment the questionnaire freely in a form field after the final question. In addition, some of the questions had expandable form fields enabling commenting and around half of the respondents used at least one of the comment fields whilst taking the survey, and around a quarter of the respondents took the opportunity to voice their opinions through adding thoughts regarding the research topic in the comment field after the final question.

The character of the comments varied, some respondents shared their experiences while others shared their opinions regarding e.g. living in Finland, how they perceive Finnish people and how they have been treated whilst being in Finland. The issue that was perhaps brought up and expressed most strongly was that the local language being a prerequisite for finding a job, is a fact that has negative consequences not only for the respondents, students and the foreign population in general but also for Finland.

The following comment was made by a 27-year-old male respondent from Europe who has been living in Finland for three years: "As your work appears to revolve around the issue of social integration in the labor market and the general society I wish to point out that I feel these are two very different issues in Finland". The respondent continues to explain that the Finnish society in general is welcoming of foreigners and embraces them into society in a way that transcends cultural and particularly language barriers. The respondent proceeds to comments that the labour market on the other hand, has quite the opposite practice and that both governmental institutions and companies are rigid in terms of Finnish language skills: "[e]ven Swedish as the country's second official language does not seem to support one's value for the job market. Rather than trying to keep highly trained foreign workforce in the country by offering language courses upon starting a job or offering a certain

time period to acquire advanced language skills, Finnish remains a rigorous precondition." On question number 21, regarding the level of integration into the Finnish society, the respondent chose option number 4, which means that he considers himself integrated, but not fully.

A similar statement is made by a 42-year-old, male PhD student from Asia who has been living in Finland for 3 years: "Finland is a very nice country to live [in] however, it needs to be open for more international jobs and the language of communication might be English rather than the restrictions of Finnish or Swedish".

A 26-year-old Asian female, who has been living in Finland for 7 months, states that finding a job is difficult due to language barriers. The respondent writes: "I cannot find a part time job here even [if] it is as a cleaning job".

Both male and female respondents from differing geographical backgrounds and who had been living in Finland for varying amounts of time commented about the work situation in Finland being difficult when one does not speak Finnish.

A correlation between country/continent of origin and perceived integration was apparent in the results of the analysis. All of the three respondents who chose the option that they do not feel integrated at all were African and male. The following description regarding experiencing special treatment due to one's origin (question 15) was made by a 23-year-old female from Japan who has been living in Finland for 4,5 years: "It totally depends on your nationality, as a Japanese, I always get very positive attitudes from Finns [as] they have a good impression of my country, but some Finns have negative images/impressions toward some nationalities".

A 31 year-old African male, who has been living in Finland for three years, states that "particularly Africans are seen as strange and bad people" and that Finns have difficulties trusting Africans. As a result Finns tend to judge before approaching. The respondent makes the following comment in the comment field below the final ques-

tion: "It is obvious that foreigners have to make the steps towards the integration and do everything by themselves...It seems like we are walking towards it but they are walking backwards. Also for us students nothing is done for real integration. We are left in the middle not knowing where to go. Of course the school arranges Finnish course but it is not enough. The course in school is too formal in a way that we try to pass just for the credits...The government should arrange a real integration programme for students so that we can stay here and give back to the society what we got from our education."

A 24-year-old African male who has been living in Finland for 3 years and who regards himself "not completely unintegrated" on the 5-point integration scale, makes the following comment "I feel it's not wise if Finland has succeeded in bringing some of the best brains from various countries round the world to Finland especially from Africa, only for them to lose them after graduation" and the respondent wishes that Finland were to open up more and offer more opportunities for exploration after graduation.

4.4.4. Factors affecting the outcome of the quantitative research

There is a fair share of factors that could possibly have affected the final outcome of the research, such as the rate of return of the questionnaires. The final number of returned and filled in questionnaires was 52 which represents about 7,4 percent of the total estimated amount of international students studying in Vaasa.

$$\frac{52 \text{ respondents}}{700 \text{ International Students}} = 7,42 \%$$

Another factor that might have influenced the responses is language – the language of the questionnaire was English and most of the respondents are not native English speakers and might therefore not have understood the questionnaire as it was intended

to be interpreted. Although the results of the pilot testing were positive, language is also a factor that must be taken into consideration. The scale of the study might possibly be the biggest aspect regarding the validity and reliability of the study. The study was small scale and the outcome would most likely have been different had there been a bigger number of respondents.

4.5. Using qualitative research methods for the study

4.5.1. Qualitative research results

Another objective of this study was to get information concerning mainly multicultural employment issues from an employer's point of view. There are several multinational companies located in Vaasa, and within these companies there are a lot of foreign workers. A small-scale qualitative research was conducted, researching matters related to multiculturalism, communication and recruitment. Human Resource departments of a few selected companies were contacted and they were each given questions designed to gain some insight into the perceptions about working in a multicultural environment (see Appendix 2). The questions were prepared in Microsoft Word and the method of distribution was e-mail. Two of the contacted companies delivered complete responses which shall be presented shortly. Due to the nature of the questions, the respondents will remain anonymous and shall hereafter be referred to as Company A and Company B.

4.5.2. Case: Company A

The respondent, Company A, is a multinational company with branches located in several different countries all over the world. The company has around 2800 workers in Vaasa and the foreign staff represents nearly 4 percent of the employees. Company A stated that they receive a lot of foreign applicants and also a large amount of applications from foreign students. The fact that Vaasa is a diverse city can be noticed within the company which has employees from 39 different nations working in Finland. In the recruitment process, the most desirable employee characteristics are

summed up in three words, *energy*, *excellence* and *excitement*, and the recruitment process is the same both when hiring a foreigner and hiring a Finnish person.

When asked to comment on the importance and the impact of the knowledge of the local language in the integration/acculturation process for foreigners' chances of finding work in a new host country, the respondent answered that the statement is probably true, i.e. that knowledge of the local language is important, and when asked if the statement can be applied to Company A, the response was that "[a]s an employer we usually demand English". Some positions require local language skills, but in most cases English is the (only) language that is needed.

When asked about whether the company offers any form of orientation, integration or development programmes for its employees, the respondent informs that introduction courses are offered for newcomers and that there are hundreds of different courses available in the offering. The integration of Company A's foreign personnel is reportedly rather good, fact is that in many cases, foreign workers coming to Vaasa to work are already employees of the company in subsidiaries located in other countries, therefore the employees are already aware of the company's policies etc. before arrival.

When asked if the respondent agrees with the statement "hiring a Finnish person is easier than hiring a foreigner", the answer is that they agree with the reasoning that when hiring a foreigner, things such as bank account issues and taxation issues need to be observed more, that the process of hiring a foreigner is more time consuming and in that sense easier but that those issues do not prevent the hiring of a foreigner.

When asked to describe the differences between managing a multicultural team and a team that is completely Finnish or homogenous, Company A stated that the "foreman needs to know differences between different culture and how these influence the team" and when asked to describe the pros and cons of managing a multicultural team, the answer" [i]n a global company this is necessary" for the reason that multicultural customers equals multicultural employees.

The respondent describes the cross-cultural communication within the company as being smooth, this because of the fact that brochures and websites are in English and portions of the meetings are held in English which is also the usual language of email correspondence.

Cultural differences within the company are visible. However, the differences do not have too big of an influence on the everyday working life. Such things as eating and food habits, hobbies, bathroom usage and religious practices are free time activities and do not affect work per se. Company A, states that the integration of the foreign workers is smooth; the company has procedures and steps for its foreign workers prior to arrival, during the assignment and after the assignment has ended. All departments within the company are more or less multicultural.

4.5.3. Case: Company B

The second respondent, Company B is another multinational company operating in Vaasa. The company has around 2500 employees in the city and the number of foreign workers is high but there are no exact figures. Company B has stated that they receive several applicants from foreigners as well as foreign students to various positions within the company, both for entry level and managerial positions. The fact that Vaasa is a diverse city is noticed by the company in the sense that many foreign students contact the company whenever there has been a fair or there is an open trainee position. Similarly to Company A, Company B also states that the recruitment process is the same regardless of the origins of an applicant, the same characteristics are sought for in every candidate and Company B emphasises motivation, eagerness to learn, loyalty the ability to be a team player and to be hard working as the desired traits for an ideal employee.

According to research, knowledge of the local language(s) is important in the integration or acculturation process and also influences foreigners' chances of finding work

in the new host country. When asked to comment on this statement, the respondent says that this is "mostly true". In Company B, Finnish in particular, is the main language of communication and although an employee might manage to work exclusively in English in some cases, the knowledge of the local language would be beneficial for the sake of adapting to the work community where everyday discussions and a big portion of the communication are held in Finnish. The respondent also states that knowledge of the local language is also good due to the fact that many of the instructions etc. are in Finnish.

Company B offers orientation and development programmes for its employees and they have reported that the incentives are the same both for Finnish workers and foreign workers, however, they also do offer Finnish cultural orientation in cases where it is needed. In cases where a foreigner moves to Vaasa or Finland from abroad, the company is able to offer an "assistant" who helps in orientation matters such as how to pay bills, pharmacy conduct, show where the police station is located etc. When asked to describe how the integration of foreigners into the company is, Company B reports that it is "very good".

When asked to comment on the statement "hiring a Finnish person is easier than hiring a foreigner", the respondent neither agrees nor disagrees and adds that when it comes to the recruitment process, no differences can be seen. However, during the period of introduction, more effort and attention needs to be paid to foreigners.

The main differences of managing a team that is multicultural or non-homogenous mostly concerns the language and in some cases the difference can be noticed from a cultural aspect. When asked to describe the pros and cons of managing multicultural staff, the respondent states that the positive sides are reflected through different views of doing business, knowledge of other business markets and broader language skills within the team. Disadvantages might be the cultural differences and the fact that the everyday working language is not always English.

Cross-cultural communication is said to run smoothly within the company but it also varies from team to team; if the team is accustomed to having foreigners doing different tasks, there is usually no problem or challenges related to communication. Cultural differences generally do not affect every day working life in Company B due to the fact that there tends to be mutual understanding from both foreigners and Finnish workers alike; the foreign workers adapt to Company B's way of doing business and the Finns accept the foreigners' cultures and ways of living. The respondent believes that the integration process is smooth from the foreign workers' perspective.

Finally, Company B states that all of its employees, regardless of nationality or origin, are treated equally. The international environment of the company is seen as a benefit due to the advantages of different types of languages and skills that come with internationality and therefore the organizational culture is said to comprise all personnel.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The principal aim of the study was to shed some light onto the situation of foreign students in Vaasa regarding cultural issues, social integration and labour related matters. Establishing connections that were originally not thought of between variables from the collected data was also a key aspiration of the thesis.

The theoretical part of the study brought up issues concerning foreigners' stance in the labour market and society, which included facts and figures about (un)employment, legislative matters related to foreigners' rights whilst integrating and a brief presentation of organizations that help foreigners with matters related to integration. Culture and cultural issues were also an important part of the theoretical framework. Topics regarding for instance cultural differences and the effect they have on people, communication and multicultural working environments were also discussed.

A questionnaire was addressed to foreign students studying in higher educational facilities in Vaasa. Vaasa has approximately 700 international students per year of which the majority study at either the University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) or at the University of Vaasa. Most of the international students at VAMK, if not all, received the questionnaire per email. A mailing list was obtained for the distribution of the questionnaire to international students studying at the University of Vaasa, however, not all of the international students subscribe to the particular mailing list which the questionnaire was sent to and therefore determining the number of students who had access to the questionnaire is difficult. For future research, complementary methods of distribution e.g. handing out the questionnaire in paper format on location and/or offering motivators could be done in order to optimize the response rate.

The analysis software determined to be most suitable for the analysis of the quantitative research was SPSS, due to the programme's capability of creating crosstabula-

tions of different variables and therefore discovering links that perhaps would have remained unnoticed. Excel was also used to perform some calculations and for the making of a graph.

Finland is an attractive country to study in, not only for its good reputation regarding the quality of the education but it seems that a majority of the respondents have chosen to study in Finland due to the fact that education is free, and this is regardless of the respondent's origins. Finland is not only an attractive country to study in but also a desirable working location after graduation - the main obstacle is finding a job. Several respondents commented that the demand on language skills, particularly Finnish skills, should be more lenient. The results of the research showed that there is indeed a link between perceived level or feeling of integration and a person's origins. The differences between the treatment of people depending on which continent they come from is surprisingly big. To answer the question whether or not Finland is a healthy and prosperous milieu for foreigners, the answer is highly dependent on who is asking the question. The truth of the matter is that ethnic background does matter to some extent in Finland, particularly in relation to social integration, and researching this matter from an employer's point of view could be complicated yet necessary.

Although the main targets were reached, regarding the obtained data from the quantitative research, there is always room for further development and improvement. The questionnaire could have been further deliberated, and instead of having such a wide range of general questions, additional qualitative questions could have been used in terms of more specific questions about e.g. the business sector the respondent is working in or has worked in, to see if the respondents have been able to or will be able to make use of their education in Finland. In general, more emphasis could have been put on researching the students' position in the labour market.

For more universal results, a nationwide study could be conducted in order to find out whether foreign/international students perceive their level of integration differ-

ently depending on where in Finland they are studying and also, to find out whether or not being treated differently due to one's origins is a common occurrence in the entire country. A comparative study between international students and Finnish students could also be conducted in order to see the differences between the treatment and perceptions of the students.

The number of people immigrating to Finland keeps on increasing annually, and the foreign labour force represents approximately 2,5 percent of the entire labour force. However, differences between the national unemployment rate and the unemployment rate of foreigners are significantly high. In order to get a better picture of the existing differences between the employment situations of foreigners and Finns, a comparative research between Finnish students and foreign students could be conducted.

Another objective of the thesis was to get some perspective from the point of view of employers from multinational companies located in and operating in Vaasa, for the sake of determining how multiculturalism affects the working environment and also to be able to find out foreigners' prospects of being hired; if there are any differing procedures or other factors involved in the recruitment process and to see how cross-cultural communication functions. The case companies used in this study were rather positive on all matters regarding foreigners and their prospects of being hired, cross-cultural communication and multiculturalism within the working place. The responses of two multinational companies were used in the study. The questionnaires were sent to three multinational companies in Vaasa of which two companies responded after being sent reminders. The low initial interest in responding might have been due to the fact that the research subject can be sensitive for companies, and that there are no definite answers to the questions which were mostly open-ended.

Although both the primary researches conducted in this study were rather small scale in nature, the results give an indication on how the current situation is for interna-

tional students in Vaasa and foreigners in general. Adler (2008) says that the chances of misunderstandings in communication occurring between people from different cultures increase the greater the distance between the cultures of the sender and the receiver are. This can also be detected in some of the comments received by the respondents and this could be an interesting research topic to elaborate on for further research. For future studies, a qualitative research as a complimentary study to the quantitative research could be conducted amongst international students to get more information regarding how they have experienced their time in Finland. More representatives from each continent would perhaps depict the situation of students more accurately and a higher response rate would perhaps be necessary to better and more accurately depict foreigners' integration into the Finnish society and labour market.

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SURVEY

Hello! My name is Carita Dahlskog, I am a final-year student from VAMK, conducting a survey amongst international students in Vaasa concerning "Foreign Students' Integration into the Finnish Labour Market and Society" as part of the research for my Bachelor's Thesis. I would be very grateful if you were able to spare a few moments to fill in this questionnaire. Thank You! The results will be processed anonymously! (Please note that the form fields are expandable)

1. Age? _____

2. Gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male

3. How long have you been living in Finland?

4. How long are you planning on staying in Finland in total?

☐ <6 months ☐ <1 year ☐ Duration of degree/studies ☐ permanently ☐ Unsure
☐ Other _____

5. Did you move here for any of the following reasons?

☐ Studies ☐ Work ☐ spouse/partner ☐ other reason, which? _____

6. a) Are you currently a student?

☐ Yes, degree student ☐ Yes, exchange student ☐ No/no longer (if no, jump to question 7)

b) Please state your current school:

☐ VAMK ☐ University of Vaasa ☐ Åbo Akademi ☐ Novia ☐ Hanken
☐ Other, which? _____

c) What will your current studies lead to?

☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree ☐ Other _____

7. Main reason(s) for studying in Finland?

☐ Quality of education ☐ Free/inexpensive education ☐ Recommendation ☐ Other

8. Where are you originally from?

☐ Europe ☐ Africa ☐ Asia ☐ Oceania ☐ North America ☐ South America/Central America

which country (optional)? _____

9. Do you have a previous degree from your home country?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes, full-time ☐ Yes, part-time ☐ Unemployed
☐ Job seeker ☐ Not looking for a job at the moment

11. Have you done your practical training in Finland?

a) ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet, but I will ☐ No, I will not ☐ Unsure

b) if you answered either "No" or "Unsure" to question 11 a), please state why:

☐ I wasn't/haven't been able to find an internship ☐ I prefer another location
☐ My studies do not require practical training ☐ other reason, why? _____

12. Which of the following languages do you speak? (fluently enough to have a conversation in)

a) ☐ Finnish ☐ Swedish ☐ English ☐ German ☐ French ☐ Spanish ☐
Other(s)? _____

b) Are you currently attending any language course(s) in either Finnish or Swedish?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I will participate in the future ☐ I have already participated ☐ Un-
sure

13. Do you believe that knowledge of either Finnish or Swedish is important when

a) Living in Finland? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
b) Working in Finland? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

14. How would you describe the general attitude towards foreigners, in Finland?

☐ Positive ☐ Mostly positive ☐ Neutral ☐ Mostly negative ☐ Negative
Comments _____

15. Have you ever experienced *special treatment* due to your origins whilst being in Finland?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Explain(optional) _____

16. Have you ever participated in an integration programme/course?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

17. Does your school offer a sufficient amount of information about the Finnish Society?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

18. Is Finland significantly different from your home country?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

19. Do you regret coming to Finland?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Unsure

Comments: _____

20. Given the choice or opportunity, would you stay and work in Finland upon graduation?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

21. How integrated into the Finnish society do you consider yourself on a scale from 1-5

(1= not integrated at all, 5= fully integrated)? select your answer from this drop-down menu

22. Finally, what are you studying (optional)? _____

Feel free to add comments _____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Hello! My name is Carita Dahlskog, I am a final-year student of International Business at the University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa and I am currently doing research for my Bachelor's Thesis. The working title for my study is "Foreign Students' Integration into the Finnish Labour Market and Society" in which I am trying to find out the perceptions of foreign students studying in Vaasa regarding issues such as e.g. integration and culture. An equally important part of the study is finding out these issues from an employer's point of view, and therefore I am sending this questionnaire to you. Your answers would help shed some light onto the current situation of foreigners in the labour market as well as assist me in gathering important information in order to compile an as objective and informative thesis as possible. Thank you in advance for your participation! Please note that the form fields are expandable. **(Feel free to write your answers in either English, Finnish and/or Swedish, if you do not have the exact figures, please estimate)**

1. How many employees does your company have in Vaasa? _____
 - a. How many of your workers are foreign? _____
 - b. Do you have a lot of foreign applicants? (Please state if mostly for entry level or managerial positions etc.) _____
 - c. Do you receive a lot of applications from foreign students? _____

2. In terms of nationalities, Vaasa is one of the most diverse cities in Finland. Can this be seen in your company? In which way? _____

3. In the recruitment process, which are the most desirable characteristics you seek for in a candidate?
 - a. Please describe the qualities of an ideal employee _____
 - b. Do you have the same process and criterions when hiring a foreigner?

4. Research has shown that knowledge of the local language is important in the integration/ acculturation process for foreigners and also has an impact on the chances of finding work in the new host country.
 - a. What are your comments to this statement? _____
 - b. Can this statement be applied to your company? Please explain _____

- c. Is the knowledge of either Finnish or Swedish necessary when working for your company? _____
5. Does your company offer any form of orientation /integration/development programmes or incentives for its employees? _____
- a. What sort of incentives do you offer your foreign personnel? _____
- b. How would you describe the integration of your foreign personnel? _____
6. What are your thoughts on the following statement: "Hiring a Finnish person is easier than hiring a foreigner"?
- ☐ Agree - please list arguments supporting this option _____
- ☐ Disagree - please list arguments supporting this option _____
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree, please list arguments supporting this option _____
7. Please describe:
- a. Differences between managing a team that is multicultural and a team that is completely Finnish/homogenous _____
- b. Please describe pros and cons of managing multicultural or international staff _____
8. How does the cross-cultural communication work in your company? _____
9. Are cultural differences visible and how do they affect every day working life? _____
10. Is the process of integration smooth for your foreign workers? _____
11. Finally, how would you describe the organizational culture of your company/ unit and does it comprise all personnel? _____

Feel free to add comments regarding the subject: _____